



Establishment and Maintenance of Central Registries for Child Abuse Reports: Summary of State Laws

Every State has developed procedures for maintaining records of child abuse and neglect. Most States maintain some sort of central registry, which is a centralized database of child abuse and neglect investigation records. Approximately 42 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories of American Samoa and Guam have statutorily created central registries.¹ Registries in other States, however, may be maintained as a matter of administrative or agency policy

¹ The word *approximately* is used to stress the fact that States frequently amend their laws. This information is current only through August 2005. Colorado, Kentucky, Maine, Minnesota, New Mexico, the Northern Mariana Islands, the Virgin Islands, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin currently do not have central registries mandated by statute.

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Purpose of Central Registries

rather than statutory mandate and are beyond the scope of this publication.²

While a majority of States have statutes authorizing the establishment of a central registry, some States (including Maine, Minnesota, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) do not have statewide, centralized registries. In those States, records may be maintained by the agencies that received the reports of suspected abuse or neglect.

Central registries and the systematic record keeping of child abuse and neglect reports serve to assist in the identification and protection of abused and neglected children. Reports contained in central registries are typically used to aid social services agencies in the investigation, treatment, and prevention of child abuse cases and to maintain statistical information for staffing and funding purposes.

In many States, central registry records are used to screen persons who will be entrusted with the care of children. Approximately 29 States and the District of Columbia allow or require a check of central registry or department records for individuals applying to be child or youth care providers.³ Information is made available to employers in the childcare business, schools, or health care industry. Many States also require a check of central registry records as part of the background check for foster and adoptive parent applicants.⁴

² For information on State registries, see Chapter 4 of the April 2003 *National Study of Child Protective Services Systems and Reform Efforts: Review of State CPS Policy* by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, and Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, available at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/CPS-status03/state-policy03/chapter4.htm>.

³ Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming.

⁴ Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Guam, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming require central registry checks for foster parents. These States (except for Guam and Vermont) also require the checks for adoptive parents, as do Arizona, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, New Mexico, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, and South Dakota.

Content and Maintenance

The type of information contained in central registries and department records varies from State to State but usually includes the child's name and address; the name of the mother, father, or guardian; the name of any siblings; the nature of the harm to the child; the name of the alleged perpetrator(s); and the findings of any investigations. Some States maintain all investigated reports of abuse and neglect in their central registries, while others maintain only substantiated reports. Access to information maintained in registries and department records also varies among States.⁵ In addition, the length of time the information is held and the conditions for expunction vary from State to State.⁶

⁵ See the Information Gateway publication *Disclosure of Confidential Child Abuse and Neglect Records*, available at www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/confide.cfm.

⁶ See the Information Gateway publication *Review and Expunction of Central Registries and Reporting Records*, available at www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/registry.cfm.

Alabama

Establishment

Ala. Code § 26-14-8

The Department of Human Resources shall establish a statewide central registry.

Purpose

Ala. Code § 26-14-8

The purpose of the central register is to:

- Contain reports of child abuse and neglect
- Prevent or to discover abuse or neglect of children through the information contained therein

Reports or records in cases determined to be 'not indicated' shall not be used or disclosed for purposes of employment or other background checks.

Contents

Ala. Code § 26-14-8

The central register shall contain:

- All information in any written reports
- The record of the final disposition of the report, including services offered and services accepted
- The plan for rehabilitative treatment
- The names of persons requesting information from the registry

Maintenance

Ala. Code § 26-14-8

Requests for information where no report exists may be destroyed 3 years from the date of the request.

Alaska

Establishment

Alaska Stat. § 47.17.040(a)

The Department of Health and Social Services shall maintain a central registry.

Purpose

Alaska Stat. § 47.17.040(b)

In accordance with department regulations, investigation reports may be used by appropriate governmental agencies with child-protection functions, inside and outside the State, in connection with investigations or judicial proceedings involving child abuse, neglect, or custody.

Contents

Alaska Stat. § 47.17.040(a)

The registry shall contain all investigation reports but not the reports of harm.

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

American Samoa

Establishment

Ann. Code § 45.2020

A central registry is established within the agency.

Purpose

Ann. Code § 45.2021

Reports in the registry are used to determine the existence of prior records in order to evaluate the circumstances of the child.

Contents

Ann. Code § 45.2022

The registry shall contain:

- All information in the written reports
- The final disposition of the report, including services offered and services accepted
- The plan for rehabilitative treatment
- The names of persons requesting information from the registry

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Arizona

Establishment

Rev. Stat. § 8-804(A)

The Department of Economic Security shall maintain a central registry.

Purpose

Rev. Stat. §§ 8-804; 8-804.01

- To conduct background checks as one factor to determine qualifications for foster home licensing, adoptive parent certification, childcare home certification, registration of unregulated childcare homes with the childcare resource and referral system, and home and community based services certification for services to children
- To conduct background checks as one factor to determine qualifications for persons applying for employment in positions that provide direct service to children or vulnerable adults
- To identify and review reports concerning individual children and families, in order to facilitate the assessment of risk
- To determine the nature and scope of child abuse and neglect in this State and to provide statewide statistical and demographic information concerning trends in child abuse and neglect
- To allow comparisons of this State's statistical data with national data
- To comply with § 8-804.01(B), that allows use of the records:
 - » To assess the safety and risk to a child
 - » To determine placement
 - » To determine type and level of services
 - » To assist in a criminal investigation
 - » To meet Federal and State reporting requirements

Contents

Rev. Stat. § 8-804(A)-(B)

The registry will maintain reports of child abuse and neglect that are substantiated and the outcome of investigations.

Maintenance

Rev. Stat. §§ 8-804; 8-804.01

- If the department received a report before September 1, 1999, and determined that the report was substantiated, the department shall maintain the report in the central registry until 18 years from the child victim's date of birth.
 - If the department received a report on or after September 1, 1999, and determined that the report was substantiated, the department shall maintain the report in the central registry for 25 years after the date of the report.
 - All reports of child abuse and neglect and related records shall be maintained in the department's case management information system in accordance with the timeframes established in the department's records retention schedule.
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Arkansas

Establishment

Ann. Code § 12-12-505

There is established within the Department of Human Services a statewide central registry.

Purpose

Ann. Code § 12-12-505

The registry is used for the collection of records of cases involving allegations of child maltreatment that are determined to be true.

Contents

Ann. Code § 12-12-505

Records of cases where allegations are true shall be retained by the registry.

Maintenance

Ann. Code § 12-12-505

- If an offender is found guilty of, pleads guilty to, or pleads *nolo contendere* to an act that is the same act for which the offender is named in the central registry, regardless of any subsequent expungement of the offense from the offender's criminal record, the offender shall always remain in the central registry, unless the conviction is reversed or vacated.
 - Information included in the automated data system shall be retained indefinitely to assist in future risk and safety assessment.
 - Hard copy records of unsubstantiated reports shall be retained no longer than 18 months for purposes of audit.
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California

Establishment

Penal Code § 11170

The Department of Justice shall maintain an index of all reports of child abuse and severe neglect.

Purpose

Penal Code § 11170

- The Department of Justice shall notify an agency or a district attorney of any information maintained that is relevant.
- The department shall make available to a law enforcement agency, county welfare department, or county probation department that is conducting a child abuse investigation relevant information contained in the index.
- The department shall make available to the State Department of Social Services, or to any county licensing agency that has contracted with the State for the performance of licensing duties, information regarding a known or suspected child abuser maintained in the index concerning any person who is an applicant for licensure, any adult who resides or is employed in the home of an applicant for licensure, anyone who is an applicant for employment in a position having supervisory or disciplinary power over a child or children, or anyone who will provide 24-hour care for a child or children in a residential home or facility.

Contents

Penal Code § 11170

- The index shall not contain any reports that are unfounded.
- The submitting agencies are responsible for the accuracy, completeness, and retention of reports.

Maintenance

Penal Code § 11170

- The index shall be continually updated.
- The department shall be responsible for ensuring that the Child Abuse Central Index accurately reflects the report it receives from the submitting agency.
- The department may adopt rules governing recordkeeping and reporting.

Colorado

Establishment

Rev. Stat. § 19-3-313.5

Effective January 1, 2004, Colorado repealed its law providing for a central registry.

The State Department [of Social Services] shall maintain the records and reports of child abuse and neglect.

Purpose

Rev. Stat. § 19-3-313.5

- Records or reports may be used for purposes of employment checks or other background checks unless it is determined that a report is to be unsubstantiated or false.
- The State department may maintain such records and reports in case files for the purpose of assisting in determinations of future risk and safety assessments.

Contents

Rev. Stat. § 19-3-313.5

The State department shall provide reliable, accurate, and timely information concerning records and reports of child abuse or neglect.

Maintenance

Rev. Stat. § 19-3-313.5

The State department shall provide training to county departments to achieve consistency and standardization in entering data into computer systems maintaining information related to records and reports of child abuse or neglect.

Connecticut

Establishment

Gen Stat. § 17a-101k

[Effective October 1, 2005]

The Commissioner of Children and Families shall maintain a registry of the commissioner's findings of abuse or neglect of children.

Purpose

Gen. Stat. § 17a-101k

[Effective October 1, 2005]

Regulations shall be adopted that shall provide for the use of the registry on a 24-hour daily basis to prevent or discover abuse of children.

Contents

Gen. Stat. § 17a-101k

The Commissioner shall adopt regulations to implement the provisions of this section.

Maintenance

Gen. Stat. § 17a-101k

The Commissioner shall establish a hearing process for any appeal by a person of a determination that a person is responsible for the abuse of a child.

Delaware

Establishment

Ann. Code Tit. 16, § 905

The Division of Family Services shall maintain a central registry and an internal information system.

Purpose

Ann. Code Tit. 16, § 905

The registry and internal information system will be used to determine whether previous reports have been made regarding actual or suspected abuse or neglect of the subject child, or any siblings, family members, or the alleged perpetrator, and to provide such information as may be contained in previous reports.

Contents

Ann. Code Tit. 16, §§ 902(4); 905

- The registry will contain information about persons who have been substantiated for abuse or neglect.
- Unsubstantiated reports may be kept in the internal information system by the division at its discretion.

Maintenance

Ann. Code Tit. 16, § 906

- The division shall update the internal information system at regular intervals during the investigation.
- At the conclusion of the investigation or family assessment, the internal information system shall be updated to include a case finding.

District of Columbia

Establishment

Ann. Code § 4-1302.01

The agency shall maintain a Child Protection Register.

Purpose

Ann. Code § 4-1302.01

The purposes of the Register are to:

- Maintain a confidential index of cases of abused or neglected children
- Assist in identification and treatment of abused and neglected children and their families
- Serve as a resource for the evaluation, management, and planning of programs and services for abused and neglected children

Contents

Ann. Code § 4-1302.02

The Register shall retain the following information about each substantiated and inconclusive report:

- The recipient of the report
- The date and time of the receipt of the report
- The information required by § 4-1321.03
- The ward in which the child lives and other demographic information concerning the incident
- The agencies to which the report was referred and the date and time of the referral
- The agency making the initial investigation, the summary of the results of the initial investigation, and the dates and the times the investigations were begun and terminated
- The agency making the social investigation, the summary of the results of the social investigation, the dates and the times said investigation was begun and terminated, the services offered and when they were offered
- The agency or agencies to which the referrals were made and the services requested, with the dates of the opening and the closing of the case
- The placements of the child and the dates of each placement
- Court actions concerning the child and the dates thereof
- The date the case was closed
- Other information required for research, planning, evaluation, and management purposes

Maintenance

Ann. Code § 4-1302.02

The staff that maintains the Register shall review all open cases every 6 months to assure that information is current.

Florida

Establishment

Ann. Stat. § 39.201

The department shall establish and maintain a central child abuse hotline and automated tracking system.

Purpose

Ann. Stat. § 39.201

The central abuse hotline shall be operated in such a manner as to enable the department to:

- Immediately identify and locate prior reports of abuse
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of department programs for reporting and investigating suspected cases of abuse
- Track critical steps in the investigative process to ensure compliance with all requirements
- Maintain and produce aggregate statistical reports monitoring patterns of child abuse
- Serve as a resource for the evaluation, management, and planning of preventive and remedial services for children who have been subjected to abuse, abandonment, and neglect

Contents

Ann. Stat. § 39.202

The department shall make and keep reports and records of all cases relating to child abuse, abandonment, and neglect.

Maintenance

Ann. Stat. § 39.202

The department shall preserve the records pertaining to a child and family until 7 years after the last entry was made or until the child is 18 years of age, whichever date is reached first.

Georgia

Establishment

Ann. Code § 49-5-181

The Division of Family and Children Services shall establish and maintain a central registry.

Purpose

Ann. Code § 49-5-182

The registry shall enable abuse investigators to:

- Immediately identify and locate prior reports of child abuse
- Maintain and produce aggregate statistical data of reported cases of child abuse

Contents

Ann. Code §§ 49-5-181; 49-5-183

- The central registry shall receive all information regarding confirmed and unconfirmed cases of child abuse reported to the division.
- The abuse investigator shall make a report that shall include:
 - » The name, age, sex, race, social security number if known, and the birth date of the alleged child victim and the child's parents or caretaker
 - » The name, age, sex, race, social security number, and birth date of the person believed to have committed the abuse
 - » A summary of known details of the child abuse

Maintenance

Ann. Code § 49-5-184

The division shall include on the abuse registry the name of the alleged abuser, whether the report was confirmed or unconfirmed, and the investigator's report.

Guam

Establishment

Ann. Code Tit. 19, § 13208

There shall be established in Child Protective Services:

- An active file of reports under investigation
 - A central register of child abuse and neglect
 - A 'suspected' file (for cases where an investigation is not able to determine whether a report is indicated, substantiated, or unsubstantiated)
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Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Ann. Code Tit. 19, § 13208

The central register shall consist of substantiated and indicated reports of abuse or neglect. It shall be limited to the following information:

- The names and home addresses of the subjects of the reports
- The dates and nature and extent of the suspected abuse
- The age and sex of the children harmed or threatened with harm
- The locality in which the harm or threatened occurred
- Whether the report was classified as substantiated or indicated
- The progress of any legal proceedings brought on the basis of the report

Maintenance

Ann. Code Tit. 19, § 13208

If an investigation of a report of suspected child abuse or neglect does not determine, within 60 days from the date of the report, that the report is an indicated report, substantiated report, or an unsubstantiated report, all information identifying the subjects of such report shall be placed in Child Protective Services' suspected file for a period of 1 year.

Hawaii

Establishment

Rev. Stat. § 350-2(d)

The Department of Human Services shall maintain a central registry.

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Rev. Stat. § 350-2(d)

It shall be a registry of reported child abuse or neglect cases.

Maintenance

Rev. Stat. § 350-2(d)

- The department may retain records and information of alleged abuse or neglect with respect to a child who is the subject of a report.
- Reports of cases that are found to be unsubstantiated or are dismissed by a court shall be promptly expunged.

Idaho

Establishment

Idaho Code § 16-1629(3)

The Department of Health and Welfare shall be required to maintain a central registry.

Purpose

Idaho Code § 16-1629(3)

The registry shall be maintained for the reporting of child neglect, abuse, and abandonment information.

Contents

Idaho Code § 16-1629(6)

The department shall keep written records of investigations, evaluations, prognoses, and all orders concerning disposition or treatment.

Maintenance

Idaho Code § 16-1629(6)

The department shall keep the records of every person over whom it has legal custody.

Illinois

Establishment

325 ILCS 5/7.7

There shall be a central register of all cases of suspected child abuse or neglect maintained by the department.

Purpose

325 ILCS 5/7.7

The register shall enable the department to:

- Immediately identify and locate prior reports of child abuse or neglect
- Continuously monitor the current status of all reports
- Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of laws and programs through the development and analysis of statistical and other information

Contents

325 ILCS 5/7.7; 5/7.8; 5/7.15

- The central register shall record all initial, preliminary, and final reports.
- The names and other identifying data and the dates and the circumstances of any persons requesting or receiving information from the central register shall be entered in the register record.
- The central register may contain such other information that the department determines to be in furtherance of the purposes of this Act.

Maintenance

325 ILCS 5/7.7

The department shall maintain in the central register:

- A listing of unfounded reports where the subject of the unfounded report requests that the record not be expunged because the subject alleges an intentional false report was made
- A listing of unfounded reports where the report was classified as a priority one or priority two report in accordance with the department's rules or the report was made by a mandated reporter
- A listing for 3 years of unfounded reports involving the death, sexual abuse, or serious physical injury of a child

Indiana

Establishment

Ann. Code § 31-33-17-1

The department shall establish and maintain a centralized, computerized child abuse registry.

Purpose

Ann. Code §§ 31-33-17-1; 31-33-17-7

The registry shall be maintained for the purpose of organizing and accessing data regarding substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect that the department receives from throughout Indiana. The department shall administer the registry and the automated child protection system in a manner that enables the department to do the following:

- Immediately identify and locate prior reports of child abuse or neglect through the use of the department's computerized tracking system and automated risk assessment system
- Track steps in the investigative process to ensure compliance with all requirements for a report of child abuse and neglect
- Maintain and produce aggregate statistical reports monitoring patterns of child abuse and neglect that the department shall make available to the public upon request
- Serve as a resource for the evaluation, management, and planning of preventative and remedial services to children who have been subject to child abuse or neglect

Contents

Ann. Code §§ 31-33-17-2; 31-33-17-3

- The department shall enter a substantiated report into the registry only if at least one of the following applies:
 - » An arrest of the alleged perpetrator of the child abuse or neglect is made.
 - » Criminal charges are filed in State or Federal court against the alleged perpetrator of the child abuse or neglect.
 - » A court determines that a child is a child in need of services based on a report of child abuse or neglect.
 - » A court approves a program of informal adjustment relating to the child abuse or neglect report.
 - » A person does not substantially comply with the terms of a services referral agreement.
- The department may not enter an unsubstantiated report into the registry.

Maintenance

Ann. Code § 31-33-17-4

The department shall store data regarding the child abuse or neglect reports in a manner so that the data is accessible under the following if known:

- The child's name and date of birth
- The alleged perpetrator's name
- The names of the child's mother and father
- The name of a sibling of the child
- The name of the child's guardian or custodian, if applicable

Iowa

Establishment

Ann. Stat. § 235A.14

There is created within the State Department of Human Services a central registry for child abuse information.

Purpose

Ann. Stat. § 235A.14

The registry shall collect, maintain, and disseminate child abuse information.

Contents

Ann. Stat. § 235A.14

- The registry shall accept reports of suspected child abuse or neglect.
- The registry shall maintain records of any previous reports of abuse or neglect of the same child or another child in the same family.
- The registry shall include report data and disposition data. The registry shall not include assessment data.

Maintenance

Ann. Stat. § 235A.14

The department shall organize and staff the registry and adopt rules for its operation.

Kansas

Establishment

Ann. Stat. § 38-1520

In order to properly advise the three branches of government on the operation of the juvenile justice system, there is established within and as part of the central repository, a child in need of care information system.

Purpose

Ann. Stat. § 38-1520

The system shall serve as a repository of child in need of care information that is collected by juvenile justice agencies and reported to the system.

Contents

Ann. Stat. § 38-1520

Every juvenile justice agency shall report child in need of care information to the central repository.

Maintenance

Ann. Stat. § 38-1520

The director may determine, by rules and regulations, the reportable events to be reported in order to avoid duplication in reporting.

Kentucky

Establishment

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Louisiana

Establishment

Children's Code art. 616

The Department of Social Services shall maintain a central registry of all reports of abuse and neglect.

Purpose

Children's Code art. 616

- The purpose of the central registry, among other uses, is to provide information of past reports of abuse or neglect to assist in the proper evaluation of current reports that may include a pattern of incidents.
- Upon the written request of the court during its evaluation of an individual applying to work as a court-appointed special advocate and with the consent of the applicant, the department shall search the central registry and report to the court any justified report of abuse or neglect alleging that the applicant is a perpetrator.
- Information from investigations of reports that are inconclusive may be disclosed, with the applicant's written consent, for the limited purposes of evaluating the applicant to be a CASA volunteer, a foster parent, an adoptive parent, or caregiver.

Contents

Children's Code art. 616

The registry shall contain all reports of child abuse and neglect.

Maintenance

Children's Code art. 616

- When, after an investigation, the determination is made by the department that the report does appear to be justified, any subsequent adjudication by a court that dismisses the child in need of care petition involving a report shall be added to the registry.
- Records shall be maintained during the pendency of any litigation involving those records.

Maine

Establishment

Rev. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4004(2)(A)

The department shall receive reports of abuse and neglect.

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Maintenance

Rev. Stat. Tit. 22, § 4008(5)

- Unsubstantiated reports shall be retained for no more than 18 months unless a new referral has been received.
- Unsubstantiated reports of persons eligible for Medicaid may be retained for 5 years for Federal audit purposes.

Maryland

Establishment

Family Law § 5-714

The Social Services Administration and each local department may maintain a central registry of cases reported under the reporting laws.

Purpose

Family Law § 5-714

- The information in a central registry shall be at the disposal of:
 - » The protective services staff of the administration
 - » The protective services staffs of local departments who are investigating a report of suspected abuse or neglect
 - » Law enforcement personnel who are investigating a report of suspected abuse or neglect
- Except for information entered [after an individual has been found guilty or responsible in an indicated report], information in a central registry may not be used as a sole basis for responding to any request for background information for employment or voluntary service.

Contents

Family Law § 5-714

- Each local department shall provide the information for a central registry.
- A central registry may not include information from a local department case file until any individual found responsible for indicated or unsubstantiated child abuse or neglect has:
 - » Been found guilty of any criminal charge arising from the alleged abuse or neglect
 - » Unsuccessfully appealed the finding in accordance with the procedures established under § 5-706.1 of this subtitle
 - » Failed to exercise the appeal rights within the time frames specified in § 5-706.1
- A central registry may contain identifying information related to an investigation of abuse or neglect unless:
 - » Abuse or neglect has been ruled out
 - » The abuse or neglect finding has been expunged in accordance with § 5-707

Maintenance

Family Law § 5-714

- The department or a local department may identify an individual as responsible for abuse or neglect in a central registry only if the individual:
 - » Has been found guilty of any criminal charge arising out of the alleged abuse or neglect
 - » Has been found responsible for indicated abuse or neglect and has unsuccessfully appealed the finding in accordance with the procedures established under § 5-706.1 of this subtitle, or failed to exercise the individual's appeal rights within the time frames specified in § 5-706.1
- The department without the necessity of a request shall remove from the name of an individual described above the identification of that individual as responsible for abuse or neglect if no entry has been made for that individual for 7 years after the entry of the individual's name in a registry.

Massachusetts

Establishment

Ann. Laws Ch. 119, § 51F

The Department of Social Services shall maintain a central registry.

Purpose

Not addressed in statutes reviewed

Contents

Ann. Laws Ch. 119, §§ 51B; 51F

- The central registry shall contain information sufficient to identify children whose names are reported pursuant to the reporting laws.
- The department may keep unsubstantiated reports to assist in future risk and safety assessments.

Maintenance

Ann. Laws Ch. 119, § 51B

- A notation shall be sent to the central registry whenever further reports on a child are filed with the department.
- If an investigation determines that abuse or neglect did not occur, the report shall be classified 'allegation invalid,' and identifying information shall not be placed in the registry.

Michigan

Establishment

Comp. Laws § 722.627

The department shall maintain a statewide, electronic central registry.

Purpose

Comp. Laws §§ 722.627; 722.622

The central registry shall be used to:

- Carry out the intent of the reporting laws
- Keep a record of all reports filed with the department

Contents

Comp. Laws § 722.622

- The central registry shall maintain all reports filed with the department in which relevant and accurate evidence of child abuse or neglect is found to exist.
- If the department classifies a report of suspected child abuse or neglect as a central registry case, the department shall maintain a record in the central registry.
- A central registry case is a child protective services case that the department has classified as category I or category II. For a child protective services case that was investigated before July 1, 1999, central registry case means an allegation of child abuse or neglect that the department substantiated.

Maintenance

Comp. Laws § 722.628

The department shall enter each report made under this act that is the subject of a field investigation into the CPSI system. The department shall maintain a report entered on the CPSI system as required by this subsection until the child about whom the investigation is made is 18 years old or until 10 years after the investigation is commenced, whichever is later, or, if the case is classified as a central registry case, until the department receives reliable information that the perpetrator of the abuse or neglect is dead.

Minnesota

Establishment

Ann. Stat. § 626.556, Subd. 11(a)

The local social services agency or agency responsible for assessing or investigating the report shall maintain records concerning determinations of child maltreatment.

Purpose**Ann. Stat. § 626.556, Subd. 11c(a)**

Records of assessments or investigations that resulted in no determination of maltreatment or the need for child protective services may not be used for employment, background checks, or purposes other than to assist in future risk and safety assessments.

Contents**Ann. Stat. § 626.556, Subd. 11(a)**

The records may contain information relating to specific incidents of neglect or abuse that are under investigation, petition, or prosecution, and information relating to any prior incidents of neglect or abuse involving any of the same persons.

Maintenance**Ann. Stat. § 626.556, Subd. 11(a) & 11c**

- The records shall be collected and maintained in accordance with the provisions of chapter 13.
 - For family assessment cases and cases where an investigation results in no determination of maltreatment or the need for child protective services, the assessment or investigation records must be maintained for a period of 4 years.
 - All records relating to reports which, upon investigation, indicate either maltreatment or a need for child protective services shall be maintained for at least 10 years after the date of the final entry in the case record.
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Mississippi**Establishment****Ann. Code § 43-21-257**

- The Office of Youth Services shall maintain a State central registry of all cases obtained from the records of the youth court.
- The Department of Human Services shall maintain a State central registry on neglect and abuse cases.

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents**Ann. Code § 43-21-257**

The State central registry on neglect and abuse cases shall contain:

- The name, address, and age of each child
- The nature of the harm reported
- The name and address of the person responsible for the care of the child
- The name and address of the substantiated perpetrator of the harm reported

Maintenance**Ann. Code § 43-21-257**

The department shall adopt rules and administrative procedures, especially those procedures to afford due process to individuals, as may be necessary.

Missouri

Establishment

Ann. Stat. § 210.145

The Division of Family Services shall establish and maintain an information system operating at all times, capable of receiving and maintaining reports.

Purpose

Ann. Stat. § 210.145

The information system shall have the ability to receive reports over a single, statewide toll-free number.

Contents

Ann. Stat. § 210.145

The information system shall contain:

- The results of all investigations, family assessments, and services
- Identifying information on the subjects of the report and those responsible for the care of the child
- Other relevant dispositional information

Maintenance

Ann. Stat. §§ 210.145; 210.152

- The information system shall be updated within 30 days of the oral report, at regular intervals during the investigation, and at the completion of an investigation.
- For investigation reports in the central registry, identifying information shall be retained by the division.
- For investigation reports made by a mandated reporter, where insufficient evidence of abuse or neglect is found, identifying information shall be retained for 5 years from the conclusion of the investigation. For all other investigation reports where there is insufficient evidence, identifying information shall be retained for 2 years.
- For reports where a family assessment and services approach was used, identifying information shall be retained by the division.
- For reports in which the division was unable to locate the child, identifying information shall be retained for 10 years from the date of the report.

Montana

Establishment

Ann. Code § 41-3-202

The Department of Public Health and Human Services shall maintain a record system.

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Ann. Code § 41-3-202

Records documenting investigations and determinations of child abuse and neglect cases

Maintenance

Ann. Code § 41-3-202

If the report is unsubstantiated, all of the records, except for medical records, concerning the unsubstantiated report and the investigation shall be destroyed within 30 days after the end of the 3-year period starting from the date the report was determined to be unsubstantiated, unless:

- There had been a previous or there is a subsequent substantiated report concerning the same person.
- An order has been issued under this chapter based on the circumstances surrounding the initial allegations.

Nebraska

Establishment

Rev. Stat. § 28-718

There shall be a central register of child protection cases maintained in the Department of Social Services.

Purpose

Rev. Stat. § 28-718

The central register shall contain records of all reports of child abuse or neglect opened for investigation and classified as either court substantiated or inconclusive.

Contents

Rev. Stat. § 28-720

All cases entered into the central register shall be classified as one of the following:

- Court substantiated, if a court has entered a judgment of guilty against the subject of the report or there has been an adjudication of jurisdiction of a juvenile court over the child that relates to the report of child abuse or neglect
- Court pending, if a criminal complaint, indictment, or information or juvenile petition that relates to the subject of the report of abuse or neglect has been filed and is pending in a court of competent jurisdiction
- Inconclusive, if the department's determination of child abuse or neglect against the subject of the report was made, by a preponderance of the evidence, based upon an investigation pursuant to § 28-713

Maintenance

Rev. Stat. § 28-720

All reports that are not court substantiated, court pending, or inconclusive, shall be considered unfounded and shall be maintained only in the tracking system of child protection cases pursuant to § 28-715, and not in the central register.

Nevada

Establishment

Rev. Stat. § 432.100

A Statewide Central Registry for the Collection of Information Concerning the Abuse or Neglect of a Child shall be maintained by the division.

Purpose

Rev. Stat. § 432.100

The division may release information contained in the central registry to an employer:

- If the person who is the subject of a background investigation by the employer provides written authorization for the release of information, and either:
 - » The employer is required by law to conduct the background investigation of the person for employment purposes
 - » The person who is the subject of the background investigation could, in the course of his or her employment, have regular and substantial contact with children or elderly persons who require assistance or care from other persons
- The release of information may be only to the extent necessary to inform the employer whether the person who is the subject of the background investigation has been found to have abused or neglected a child.

Contents

Rev. Stat. § 432.100

The central registry must contain:

- Information in any substantiated report
- Statistical information on the protective services provided
- Any other information the division determines to be in furtherance of the law

Maintenance

Rev. Stat. § 432.110

- The division shall maintain a record of:
 - » The names and identifying data, dates, and circumstances of any persons requesting or receiving information from the central registry
 - » Any other information that might be helpful in furthering the purposes of the reporting laws
- The division is not required to maintain a record of information concerning requests for information from or the receipt of information by employees of an agency that provides child welfare services.

New Hampshire

Establishment

Rev. Stat. § 169-C:35

There shall be established a State central registry.

Purpose

Rev. Stat. § 169-C:35

The purpose of the registry is maintaining a record of founded reports of child abuse and neglect.

Contents

Rev. Stat. § 169-C:35

Founded reports shall be maintained in the central registry.

Maintenance

Rev. Stat. § 169-C:35-a

- Screened out reports shall be maintained for 1 year.
 - An unfounded report shall be retained for 3 years.
 - A founded report shall be retained for 7 years.
 - The department may retain generic, nonidentifying information for State and Federal reporting purposes.
-

New Jersey

Establishment

Ann. Stat. § 9:6-8.11

The Division of Youth and Family Services shall maintain the Central Registry.

Purpose

Ann. Stat. § 9:6-8.11

- Reports of abuse or neglect shall be forwarded to the central registry.
- The child abuse registry shall be the repository of all information regarding child abuse or neglect that is accessible to the public pursuant to State and Federal law.

Contents

Ann. Stat. § 9:6-8.10

Reports shall contain, where possible:

- The names and addresses of the child and the parents or guardian
- The child's age
- The nature and extent of any injuries, including any evidence of previous injury
- Any other information that might be helpful

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

New Mexico

Establishment

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

New York

Establishment

Soc. Serv. Law § 422

There shall be established within the department a statewide central register.

Purpose

Soc. Serv. Law § 422

The central register shall be capable of:

- Receiving telephone calls alleging child abuse or maltreatment
- Immediately identifying prior reports of child abuse or maltreatment
- Monitoring the provision of child protective service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Determining the existence of prior reports in order to evaluate the condition or circumstances of a child

Contents

Soc. Serv. Law § 422

The central register shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- All information in the written report
- A record of the final disposition of the report, including services offered and accepted
- The plan for rehabilitative treatment
- The names of persons requesting information from the registry
- Any other information believed to be helpful

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

North Carolina

Establishment

Gen. Stat. § 7B-311

The Department of Health and Human Services shall maintain a central registry.

Purpose

Gen. Stat. § 7B-311

The registry shall be used:

- To compile data for the appropriate study of the extent of abuse and neglect in the State
- To identify repeated abuses of the same juvenile or other juveniles in the same family

Contents

Gen. Stat. § 7B-311

The registry shall contain cases of child abuse, neglect, dependency, and child fatalities that are the result of alleged maltreatment.

Maintenance

Gen. Stat. § 7B-311

Data shall be confidential and subject to policies adopted by the Social Services Commission for its use and appropriate disclosure.

North Dakota

Establishment

Cent. Code § 50-25.1-05.5

The Division of Health and Human Services shall maintain a child abuse information index.

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Cent. Code § 50-25.1-05.5

The index shall contain all reports of decisions that services are required for child abuse, neglect, or death resulting from abuse or neglect.

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Northern Mariana Islands

Establishment

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Ohio

Establishment

Rev. Code § 2151.421

The Department of Job and Family Services shall maintain a central registry.

Purpose

Rev. Code § 2151.421

The registry shall be used to determine whether prior reports have been made in other counties concerning the child or other principals in the case.

Contents

Rev. Code § 2151.421

The registry shall receive each case that is reported to a public children services agency.

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Oklahoma

Establishment

Ann. Stat. Tit. 10, § 7111

There is established within the Department of Human Services an information system.

Purpose

Ann. Stat. Tit. 10, § 7111

The information system will be used to maintain all reports of child abuse, sexual abuse, and neglect.

Contents

Ann. Stat. Tit. 10, § 7111

The records shall contain:

- All information in the written report
- A record of the final disposition of the report, including services offered and accepted
- The plan for rehabilitative treatment plan
- Other relevant information

Maintenance

Ann. Stat. Tit. 10, § 7111

- The Division of Children and Family Services of the Department of Human Services shall be responsible for maintaining a suitably cross-indexed system of all the reports.
 - Records shall be maintained by the department until as otherwise provided by law.
-

Oregon

Establishment

Rev. Stat. § 419B.030

A central registry shall be established and maintained by the Department of Human Services.

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Rev. Stat. § 419B.030

Local offices of the department shall report to the registry in writing when an investigation shows reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused.

Maintenance

Rev. Stat. § 419B.030

The registry shall contain current information from reports catalogued by both the name of the child and the name of the family.

Pennsylvania

Establishment

23 Pa. Cons. Stat. § 6331

There shall be established in the Department of Public Welfare:

- A pending complaint file of child abuse reports under investigation
- A statewide central register of child abuse of founded and indicated reports
- A file of unfounded reports awaiting expunction

Purpose

23 Pa. Cons. Stat. § 6342

The department may use the data contained in the pending complaint file and the central register to conduct studies.

Contents

23 Pa. Cons. Stat. § 6336

The statewide central register shall include and be limited to the following information:

- Names, social security numbers, home addresses, ages, and sex of the subjects
- The dates and nature and extent of the alleged abuse
- The county in which the alleged abuse occurred
- Family composition
- The name and relationship of the child to other persons named in the report
- Factors contributing to the abuse
- The source of the report
- Services planned or provided
- Whether the report is founded or indicated
- The progress of any legal proceedings
- Whether a criminal investigation has been done and the result of any criminal prosecution

Maintenance

23 Pa. Cons. Stat. § 6338

- When the report is determined to be founded or indicated, it shall be removed from the pending file and entered in to the central registry.
- A subfile shall be created to retain indefinitely the names of perpetrators of child abuse and school employees who are the subjects of founded or indicated reports.

Puerto Rico

Establishment

Ann. Laws Tit. 8, § 442f

A central register of the referrals and protection cases shall be maintained through the Center for the Protection of Minors.

Purpose

Ann. Laws Tit. 8, § 442f

The register shall be organized in such a way so as:

- To allow the immediate location and identification of prior reports
- To ascertain the status of a case at any time
- To evaluate laws and programs through statistical analysis and other information

Contents

Ann. Laws Tit. 8, § 442f

The register shall contain, but not be limited to:

- All information in any written report
- The services offered and accepted
- The rehabilitation treatment plan
- The name, date, and other data regarding any person who requests information from the register
- Any other information that might be useful

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Rhode Island

Establishment

Gen. Laws § 42-72-7

There shall be established a central registry within the Department for Children and Their Families.

Purpose

Gen. Laws § 42-72-7

The central registry shall be responsible for the collection, receipt, dissemination, reporting, and maintenance of all files relating to children.

Contents

Gen. Laws § 42-72-7

The central registry will be the main repository for all case files, and shall establish uniform forms and standards for data acquisition and transmission.

Maintenance

Gen. Laws §§ 40-11-3(a); 42-72-7(b)

- The electronically recorded records, properly indexed by date and other essential identifying data, shall be maintained for a minimum of 3 years.
 - Any request for information, assistance, and investigation of complaints must be registered with the central registry in order to assure the elimination of duplication and for the purpose of gathering statistical data.
-

South Carolina

Establishment

Ann. Code § 20-7-680

The Department of Social Services must maintain a Central Registry of Child Abuse and Neglect within the child protective services unit.

Purpose

Ann. Code § 20-7-680

The purpose of the registry is:

- To establish a system of for the identification of abused and neglected children and those who are responsible for their welfare
- To coordinate reports
- To provide data for determining the incidence and prevalence of child abuse and neglect in the State
- To screen a person for a history of child abuse or neglect when such screening is required as a condition for employment or volunteer service in an entity regulated by the department, or a condition for issuance of a license, registration, or other operating approval by the department

Contents

Ann. Code § 20-7-680

Each entry must be accompanied by information identifying the person, including:

- The person's date of birth and address
- Any other identifying characteristics
- A description of the abuse or neglect committed

Maintenance

Ann. Code § 20-7-680

- Perpetrators must be entered in the registry only by order of a court.
 - The Registry must not contain information from reports classified as unfounded.
-

South Dakota

Establishment

Ann. Laws § 26-8A-10

The Department of Social Services shall be the central registry for reports of suspected child abuse or neglect.

Purpose

Ann. Laws §§ 26-8A-12.1; 26-8A-12.2

The department may check the registry for findings of child abuse or neglect for any of the following persons:

- Current or potential employees for Head Start programs
- Potential foster or adoptive parents
- Current or potential employees or volunteers for the Juvenile Division of the Department of Corrections or any adolescent treatment program

Contents

Ann. Laws § 26-8A-10

A report shall include:

- The name, address, date, and place of birth of the child
- The name and address of the child's parent, guardian, or other responsible person
- The date of report
- The suspected or proven instances of child abuse or neglect

Maintenance

Ann. Laws § 26-8A-12

The department will adopt rules for the operation of the registry, including:

- Filing of reports
- Procedures for notice to the subject of the report
- Amendment and expunction
- Release of information
- Statistical information
- Provisions for maintenance of records and the type of information placed in the registry

Tennessee

Establishment

Ann. Code § 37-1-406

The Department of Children's Services shall maintain an abuse registry.

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Ann. Code § 37-1-406

The registry shall maintain the findings of investigations of reports of child abuse or neglect.

Maintenance

Ann. Laws § 37-1-406

Not later than 60 days after receiving the initial report, the department shall determine whether a report of abuse was indicated or unfounded and report its findings to the department's abuse registry.

Texas

Establishment

Family Code § 261.002

The Department of Protective and Regulatory Services shall establish and maintain a central registry.

Purpose

Family Code § 261.002

- The rules shall provide for cooperation with local child services agencies and with other States in exchanging reports.
- The department shall use the information obtained to perform the background checks required under § 42.056 of the Human Resources Code.

Contents

Family Code § 261.002

The registry shall maintain reported cases of child abuse or neglect.

Maintenance

Family Code § 261.002

The department may adopt rules and regulations as are necessary to carry out this section.

Utah

Establishment

Ann. Code § 62A-4a-116

The Division shall develop and implement a management information system that meets the requirements of this section and Federal law and regulation.

Purpose

Ann. Code § 62A-4a-116

The system shall monitor the compliance of each case with division rule and policy and State and Federal law and regulation.

Contents**Ann. Code § 62A-4a-116**

The system shall maintain information about all child welfare cases and all child protective services cases. For child welfare cases, it shall provide the caseworker with a complete history of each child in that worker's caseload, including:

- A record of all past action taken by the division with regard to that child and the child's siblings
- The complete case history and all reports and information in the control of the division regarding that child and the child's siblings
- The number of times and the cumulative period of time the child has been in the custody of the division
- A record of all reports of abuse or neglect received by the division with regard to that child's parent, parents, or guardian including:
 - » For each report, documentation of the latest status or final outcome or determination
 - » Whether each report was found to be supported, unsupported, substantiated by a juvenile court, unsubstantiated by a juvenile court, without merit
- The number of times the child's parent or parents failed any child and family plan
- The number of different caseworkers who have been assigned to that child in the past

For child protective services cases, the system shall:

- Monitor the compliance of each case with division rule and policy, State law, and Federal law and regulation
- Include the age and date of birth of the alleged perpetrator at the time the abuse or neglect is alleged to have occurred, in order to ensure accuracy regarding the identification of the alleged perpetrator

Maintenance**Ann. Code § 62A-4a-116**

The management information system shall also:

- Contain all key elements of each family's current treatment plan, including dates and number of times the plan has been judicially reviewed, the number of times the parent has failed that treatment plan, and the length of time the plan has been in effect
- Alert caseworkers regarding deadlines for completion of compliance with policy, including treatment plans

Vermont**Establishment****Ann. Stat. Tit. 33, § 4916**

The Commissioner of Social and Rehabilitation Services shall maintain a registry.

Purpose**Ann. Stat. Tit. 33, § 4916**

The Commissioner shall adopt rules to permit use of the registry while preserving the confidentiality of the records.

Contents**Ann. Stat. Tit. 33, § 4916**

The registry will contain written records of all investigations initiated under § 4915 unless the report has been determined to be unsubstantiated.

Maintenance

Ann. Stat. Tit. 33, § 4916

All registry records shall be maintained according to the name of the child who has been abused or neglected and the name of the person about whom the report was made.

Virgin Islands

Establishment

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Maintenance

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Virginia

Establishment

Ann. Code § 63.2-1514

The department shall maintain a child abuse and neglect information system that includes a central registry of founded complaints.

Purpose

Ann. Code § 63.2-1514

The purpose of these records is to provide local departments with information regarding prior complaints or reports.

Contents

Ann. Code §§ 63.2-1514; 63.2-1515

- The Central Registry shall include founded reports and such information as prescribed by State board regulation.
- When the founded case does not name a parent or guardian of the child as the abuser, the child's name shall not be entered in the registry without permission of the parent or guardian.

Maintenance

Ann. Code § 63.2-1514

- The department shall maintain all unfounded investigations, family assessments, and reports determined not to be valid in a record that is separate from the central registry.
 - The record of unfounded investigations and complaints and reports determined to be not valid shall be purged 1 year after the date of the complaint or report if there are no subsequent complaints or reports regarding the same child or the person who is the subject of the complaint or report in that 1 year. The local department shall retain such records for an additional period of up to 2 years if requested in writing by the person who is the subject of such complaint or report.
-

Washington

Establishment

Rev. Code § 26.44.030(12)

The department shall maintain investigation records.

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Rev. Code § 26.44.030(12)

The department shall maintain investigation records and shall maintain a log of screened-out nonabusive cases.

Maintenance

Rev. Code §§ 26.44.030(12); 26.44.031

- The department shall conduct timely and periodic reviews of all cases constituting abuse and neglect.
 - The department shall retain information related to unfounded referrals for no longer than 6 years unless an additional report is received during that time.
-

West Virginia

Establishment

Ann. Code § 49-6A-9

Each local child protective service office shall receive reports.

Purpose

Not addressed in the statutes reviewed

Contents

Ann. Code § 49-6A-9

Each local child protective services office shall receive all reports of children known or suspected to be abused or neglected.

Maintenance

Ann. Code § 49-6A-9

Each local office shall cross-file all such reports under the names of the children, the family, and any person substantiated as being an abuser by investigation of the Department of Health and Human Resources, with the use of such person's name limited to the internal use of the department.

Wisconsin

Establishment

Ann. Stat. § 48.981

The agency shall maintain a record of its actions in connection with each report it receives.

Purpose

Ann. Stat. § 48.981

- The information in the reports shall be used by the department to monitor services provided by county departments or licensed child welfare agencies under contract with county departments or the department.
- The department shall use nonidentifying information to maintain statewide statistics on child abuse and neglect and on unborn child abuse, and for planning and policy development purposes.

Contents

Ann. Stat. § 48.981

The records shall include a description of the services provided to the child and to the parents or guardian of the child.

Maintenance

Ann. Stat. § 48.981

The agency shall update the record every 6 months until the case is closed.

Wyoming

Establishment

Ann. Stat. § 14-3-213

The State agency shall establish and maintain within the statewide child protection center a central registry of child protection cases.

Purpose

Ann. Stat. § 14-3-213

The registry shall enable the State agency to:

- Immediately identify and locate prior reports to assist in the diagnosis of suspicious circumstances and the assessment of the needs of the child
- Monitor the status of all pending child protection cases
- Evaluate the effectiveness of existing laws and programs through the development and analysis of statistical and other information

Contents

Ann. Stat. § 14-3-213

- All reports of abuse or neglect contained in the central registry shall be classified as either under investigation or substantiated.
- Unsubstantiated reports shall not be contained in the central registry.
- Any person named as a perpetrator in a substantiated report shall have a right to have included in the record his or her statement concerning the incident.

Maintenance

Ann. Stat. § 14-3-213

Within 6 months, any report classified 'under investigation' shall be reclassified as 'substantiated' or expunged, unless there is an open criminal investigation or prosecution.
